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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1875

INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// IMMEDIATE

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SUBJECT: TURKEY WILL SEND MINISTER TO SHARM MEETINGS,
REPORTS SYRIA AND IRAN WILL AS WELL

REF: ANKARA 969 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Turkey will send a state minister (to be named) to the May 3-4 Iraq meetings at Sharm el-Sheikh, GOT officials and the Iraqi Ambassador confirmed to us. MFA expects Iran and Syria will also send ministers. FonMin Gul reportedly appealed to visiting Iraqi FonMin Zebari April 26 for help on the PKK; Zebari was non-committal. End summary.

¶2. (C) GOT Deputy Special Envoy for Iraq Ozcelik told us April 27 that Turkey will send a state minister to the May 3-4 Iraq meetings at Sharm el-Sheikh, and that FonMin Gul conveyed this to visiting Iraqi FonMin Zebari the previous day. Gul's presidential candidacy obviously complicates his attendance, and the Iraqis understand this. Ozcelik reported that senior Iranian and Syrian officials have confirmed to Turkey that they will also be represented at the ministerial level. (The Iraqi Ambassador separately confirmed to us all the above information.) PM/FM foreign policy advisor Davutoglu separately informed the Ambassador April 26 that Turkey will send a minister to Sharm.

¶3. (C) Ozcelik reported that Gul and Zebari held cordial talks. Gul once again expressed Turkey's annoyance at the shift to Sharm from Istanbul for the Iraq meetings. Zebari reportedly assured Turkey of Iraqi goodwill, candidly explaining that the GOI chose Egypt primarily as a gesture toward "the Arabs." Gul suggested that Turkey host simultaneous meetings of the three working groups expected to be approved at Sharm; Zebari did not reply substantively. Ozcelik noted that the first drafting committee meeting for the ministerial communique will be held in Cairo April 28, with a subsequent session planned for April 30.

¶4. (C) The ministers agreed that 2007 was critical for Iraq, with Gul pledging support even as Turkey goes through its delicate political season. Gul told Zebari that the GOT will be able to do much more for Iraq if the GOI can take steps against the PKK, thus soothing Turkish public opinion. According to Ozcelik, Zebari got the message, but offered no specifics other than urging further dialogue, including the trilateral process. Zebari reportedly did not raise Iraqi debt held by Turkey.

15. (C) Comment: Turkey has seven state ministers, two of whom also hold Deputy PM spots. We expect the most likely representative would be Mehmet Aydin, who has substituted for Gul in other foreign settings. Other possibilities are Trade Minister Kursad Tuzmen, DPM Abdullatif Sener, and Ali Babacan, all of whom also carry the state minister title.
End comment.

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WILSON